

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic transfer apparatus including members for performing magnetic transfer of signals from one medium to another, comprising:

a base plate on which the members are placed;

a casing on the base plate ~~covering~~ enclosing the members entirely to prevent contamination from outside of the casing; and

a plurality of particle measurement devices having suction ports fixed in dispersed positions in the base plate such that dispersion characteristics of contaminants is determinable with the casing entirely enclosing the members.

2. (Original) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the particle measurement devices are disposed respectively near each of selected ones of the members.

3. (Currently Amended) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein each of the particle measurement devices includes ~~a suction port,~~

a particle counter for measuring particles present in air drawn off from the casing through the suction port, and a tube for connecting the suction port to the particle counter.

4. (Original) The magnetic transfer apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the suction port of each of the particle measurement devices is disposed respectively near each of selected ones of the members.

5. (Currently Amended) A particle monitoring method for evaluating cleanliness in a magnetic transfer apparatus, including:

measuring particles within the magnetic transfer apparatus by a plurality of particle measurement devices disposed at a plurality of dispersed measurement locations in the magnetic transfer apparatus;

specifying a source of particles based on numbers of particles measured at each of the measurement locations and numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations; and

evaluating the cleanliness in the magnetic transfer apparatus based on the measurement results.

6. (Original) The particle monitoring method according to Claim 5, wherein the evaluation of cleanliness is based on the numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations and a mean value of the measurement results.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A particle monitoring method according to Claim 6, wherein for evaluating cleanliness in a magnetic transfer apparatus, including:

measuring particles within the magnetic transfer apparatus by a plurality of particle measurement devices disposed at a plurality of measurement locations in the magnetic transfer apparatus;

specifying a source of particles based on numbers of particles measured at each of the measurement locations and numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations;

evaluating the cleanliness in the magnetic transfer apparatus based on the measurement results;

evaluating cleanliness based on the numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations and a mean value of the measurement results; and

correlating the measurement results ~~are correlated~~ to periodic operations of the members.

8. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A particle monitoring method ~~according to Claim 5, wherein~~ for evaluating cleanliness in a magnetic transfer apparatus, including:

measuring particles within the magnetic transfer apparatus by a plurality of particle measurement devices disposed at a plurality of measurement locations in the magnetic transfer apparatus;

specifying a source of particles based on numbers of particles measured at each of the measurement locations and numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations;

evaluating the cleanliness in the magnetic transfer apparatus based on the measurement results; and

correlating the measurement results ~~are correlated~~ to periodic operations of the members.

9. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A particle monitoring method ~~according to Claim 6, wherein~~ for evaluating cleanliness in a magnetic transfer apparatus, including:

measuring particles within the magnetic transfer apparatus by a plurality of particle measurement devices disposed at a plurality of measurement locations in the magnetic transfer apparatus;

specifying a source of particles based on numbers of particles measured at each of the measurement locations and numbers of particles measured in a time series at each of the measurement locations;

evaluating the cleanliness in the magnetic transfer apparatus based on the measurement results; and

the plurality of measurement devices ~~includes~~ including devices disposed respectively at a disk handler, a position detector, a foreign substance inspection unit, a format device, a master disk loader, and a transfer stage.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A magnetic transfer apparatus ~~according to Claim 1, wherein~~ including members for performing magnetic transfer of signals from one medium to another, comprising:

a base plate on which the members are placed;

a casing on the base plate covering the members entirely;

a plurality of particle measurement devices fixed in dispersed positions in the base plate; and

the plurality of measurement devices ~~includes~~ including devices disposed respectively at a disk handler, a position detector, a foreign substance inspection unit, a format device, a master disk loader, and a transfer stage.
